

STORY PAPER  
**COLLECTORS DIGEST**

VOL. 37

NO. 438

JUNE 1983



**34P**

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**COLLECTORS' DIGEST**

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THE LADY COACH

Recently we observed that Tom Merry, to get into Clavering, would have needed the coaching of a good male tutor, and added that it was improbable that his governess could have coached him into a public school.

It brought to my mind a Talbot Baines Reed story in which a lady coaches one of the heroes into Low Heath. "Tom, Dick, and Harry" is not one of the best of Reed's tales, but it is well told, and there are some highly entertaining passages. The entire story is told by one of

the three heroes, Tom Jones. Tempest, the "Harry" of the tale, is a senior and considerably older than the other two who are juniors. Harry has already been accepted into Low Heath for the next term.

A rather unlikely factor, so far as entry into Low Heath is concerned, is that in the first chapter or two, all three are expelled from their residential prep school, the Head of which is Dr. Plummer. (Rumour how all the Heads of fiction seem to have been "Doctors".)

Tom Jones goes home, expelled. His guardian puts the boy into his own business to work in the mornings, and in the afternoons he has to take lessons in a girls' school.

"Three days ago I had imagined myself everybody; two days ago I had at least imagined myself somebody; yesterday I had discovered that I was nobody; and today I was destined to wonder if I was even that."

Tom Jones has an interview with the Headmistress of the girls' school. "Well, Jones," said she - I liked that, I had dreaded she would call me Tommy.' (Shades of modern times, which we once considered in this column, in which Mr. Quelch says to Bolsover "Hi-Ya, Percy", and Percy answers "Same to you, Henry.")

Tom Jones is put in the charge of Miss Steele, a mistress at the school, who suggests that he should work for an "Exhibition" to get him into Low Heath. He is a patronising know-all at first, till he settles down to work with Miss Steele. Then he starts turning up late, afternoon after afternoon - till one afternoon when Miss Steele refuses to have anything more to do with him. He apologises and is forgiven. Till he starts using a "crib" - and Miss Steele finds out. This time, things are much more difficult for our Tom.

But at the end of Chapter 5; "Jones, T. - (Miss M. Steele, High School, Fallowfield): Exhibition, £40."

And if £40 doesn't seem much to us, it was probably worth about £500 in Reed's day. So Tom is able to join Dick and Harry at Low Heath, and the main part of the story starts. But perhaps the most entertaining chapters are the two early ones when Tom Jones is being coached by Miss Steele - a lady coach who knew her job.

#### JACK DRAKE ON THE JOB

In an entertaining article in last month's C.D., Mr. Tommy Keen

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reminisced on the early Holiday Annuals (how truly splendid those Holiday Annuals of the twenties were!) and in particular on the magnificent Annual for 1923. Mr. Keen was a bit puzzled over a Greyfriars story which introduced Drake and Rodney, and was illustrated by the Gem artist R. J. Macdonald. The story was entitled "Nugent Minor's Lesson".

Hamilton wrote the Benbow stories, with Drake and Rodney as the leading characters, for the Greyfriars Herald, when that paper resumed publication after the war, at the end of 1919. In fact he wrote 62 of them. Then Drake and Rodney were transferred to Greyfriars, and a long series of these Greyfriars tales followed. (There are still folk who tell us loftily that it was impossible for children to realise that Owen Conquest (who wrote the Benbow tales) and Frank Richards and Martin Clifford were all one and the same man. With a mountain of clues all pointing in that direction, a child who didn't realise it must have been a pretty dim child.)

Greyfriars ended suddenly in the Herald, and Charles Hamilton himself told me that the A.P. had in hand a fair number of Greyfriars tales that he had written for that paper. Those tales were linked together and published later in the Magnet. The discerning reader can easily trace those tales in the Magnet.

I have no doubt that the Holiday Annual tale "Nugent Minor's Lesson" came from the Herald group. It may even have been a reprint of one which actually appeared in the Herald. A further guide line is that R. J. Macdonald illustrated nearly all of Hamilton's work in the couple of years or so that the paper ran. In early 1922 the Herald disappeared, amalgamated with the Marvel.

## TWO AUTHORS

In recent months we have carried notices of the deaths of three men prominently connected with Sexton Blake. We have already paid tribute in this column to Pierre Quiroule. The other two were Donald Bobin and Warwick Jardine.

I have happy memories of a Sexton Blake Library entitled "The Great Diamond Bluff". This was, I believe, by one of the Bobin family - probably the father of Donald. It has always struck me as a

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fine novel with an excellent plot. I read it as a boy, and it was made into a film, though I cannot say whether it was a late silent or an early talkie.

Many years later I spoke to Herbert Leckenby of "The Great Diamond Bluff" - it would have been before C.D. came over the horizon, I think. I told Herbert how much I would love to get hold of that old S.B.L. again. One day it arrived in the post from Herbert. He asked me to accept it with his best wishes. It was a nice copy, I read it and enjoyed it all over again, and sent Herbert my grateful thanks. A few weeks later I had a letter from Herbert. He wrote: "Will you please send me 'The Great Diamond Bluff'? The owner wants it back!"

I have chuckled over it many times since. It was so typical of Herbert. Entirely generous with any of his own papers - but also with yours if you were misguided enough to lend him your old treasures. He just loved to help people - regardless.

Later on I obtained another copy of the S.B.L., had it bound, and it has a permanent place in my bookcase.

Warwick Jardine was only known to me as a substitute writer. He wrote two sub stories of Granite Grant, which never clicked. And as a St. Jim's writer he abandoned tradition after tradition - in a way which must have lost readers in droves from the Gem.

No doubt he was, in private life, a very nice man. But he was the worst sub writer ever to churn out St. Jim's stories. Because he abandoned traditions. That was how many of us regarded it long ago. The bitterness has long gone, all these years later. Most of us, now, would not have things much different from what they were. After all, things like that have given us so much to talk about and write about. We should feel lost today without them, wouldn't we?

#### THE EDITOR

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FOR SALE: POPULARS 131. V.g.c. CAPTAIN Vols, 11, 23; monthly parts 1923. Cr. WM. Reynolds Vol. 1 & 2 "The Mysteries of London". Modern Boys 371 - 380 ("School for Slackers"); S.O.L's 79, 59, 64, 257, 380. Nugget Weekly: 4, 11. Greyfriars Herald: 1 6 5, 13, 14, 33-35, 40-47, 55, 56, 66, 69, 72, 79, 80, 83, 85-92. Union Jacks 1200, 1420, 1529. Nelson Lees (os) 396, (1930) 3.

S. SMYTH, P.O. BOX 366, MONA VALE 2103, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA

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# Danny's Diary

JUNE 1933

It is exactly 30 years since the L.C.C. started their electric tramway system. The system started in South London serving such areas as Brixton and Peckham and the Elephant & Castle. Now, all these years later, the L.C.C. Tramways is the largest and finest tramway system in the world.

The Wimbledon Tennis fortnight has been another great success this year. J. H. Crawford of Australia is the men's champion, and Mrs. Moody of the United States is the women's championess. In the great final Mrs. Moody beat Dorothy Round of Britain. What a shame!

In the Modern Boy the new series of King of the Islands is going strong. First tale of the month is "The Haunted Ship". There is a stowaway on the "Dawn", and he makes the crew believe that the ketch is haunted. Next week, "The Grinning Pirate" tells how Dandy Peters, pirate of the Pacific, took over the "Dawn".

Then in "Maroon Island", Peters stranded Ken, his pal Hudson, and good old Koko on a speck of a desert island, while he, Peters, sailed off with the "Dawn". Final of the month "Lost to the World" with Ken and his pals finding themselves as modern Robinson Crusoes. It all continues next month.

The Flying Cowboy series, by George Rochester, has also continued throughout the month.

I had a Boys' Friend Library which contained "Sexton Blake's Schooldays", which is a pretty good school tale.

On Doug's birthday we all went to the Trocadero, Elephant and Castle, where they had "Crazy Week at the Trocadero". It is a very long and very marvellous show. There were two big pictures. One of these was the Four Marx Bros. in "Horse Feathers". It was a really wild picture, all about an American College and American football, and I thought it terrific. Then there was Bobby Howes in a British picture "For the Love of Mike". But the huge stage show was really the big draw - a lot of comedians who call themselves the Crazy Gang. Not

only did they do rollicking things on the stage, but in the auditorium as well. Great. Then there was Van Damm with his huge orchestra, and Quentin Maclean in a crazy organ interlude. The show lasted 4½ hours.

They advertised that the following week there would be three big pictures in the programme, with a big stage show which will include Anna May Wong, the Chinese-American film-star in person, and Max Miller, the cheeky chappie. The show is so huge that they will run only two continuous performances every day of the week.

Throughout the month the Nelson Lee Library has continued with the series about Hunter, the brutal housemaster at St. Frank's - Hunter, the Hun. First of the month is "Tricked by the Tyrant" in which the rebels return to St. Frank's, only to find that Hunter has tricked them with false promises. Then "The Secret Seven" in which the boys form a Secret Society to deal with Hunter. (This is a bit like the Rookwood story in the S.O.L. this month, of which more anon.)

Then "Good-bye to the Tyrant" in which Hunter, the awful housemaster, realises his time is running out, so he kidnaps the Headmaster. Nipper comes to the rescue. Finally "The Fall of the Tyrant" which brings Hunter to justice at long last.

The King and Queen laid the foundation stone of new buildings for the University of London at Bloomsbury. And King Feisal of Iraq has been to Britain this month on a state visit.

Good month in the Gem. The month opened with "The Robot of St. Jim's" in which Bernard Glyn invents a mechanical model of Skimpole, and the New Firm in the Shell, - Glyn, Noble, and Dane - make the fur fly.

Then came a two-story series. In "The Treasure of Rylcombe Woods", Tom Merry's cousin, Herbert Dorrian, home from South Africa, gives Tom a bag of diamonds to look after, and they are stolen at once. A rascally Portuguese, Manuel da Silva, is after the stones. In the second tale, "Billy Binks' Burglar", da Silva enlists the help of Binks, the pageboy, to get him the diamonds. It is a tale of Illicit Diamond Buying.

Last tale of the month is "Barred by his Chums". Tom Merry is sent to Coventry by Blake & Co., but they refuse to say why. Cousin Ethel helps to solve the mystery. The trouble was caused through a forged letter - forged by Gore - and at the end of the month, Gore is

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expelled. There is to be a sequel next week.

A bit of a coincidence that the last Gem tale is "Barred by his Chums". The first Magnet of the month is "Barred by his Form".

The Town Hall at Ryde on the Isle of Wight has been burned down this month. And an express train from Crewe to Euston was derailed at Rugeley. Nobody was killed, but some people were badly injured. And at Whyteleaf in Surrey a motor coach crashed into a railway embankment, and 27 people were injured.

It was Vernon-Smith who was "Barred by his Form" in the month's first tale in the Magnet. He had deserted his side in a cricket match, but he did it to help Dicky Nugent. "The Boxing Beak" is about Mr. Lascelles, the maths master who used to be a professional boxer. His old "pug" pals don't believe that he has really retired from the ring. In the sequel "The Kidnapped Master" is Mr. Lascelles, and it is the Bounder who turns out to be a friend in need.

Final tale of the month in the Magnet is "The Worst Boy in the School". He is Ponsonby of Highcliffe, and it is a great story. Mr. Shields, the Magnet artist, shows Greyfriars boys in blazers and slacks, and Highcliffe boys in Eton suits. Lovely original month in the Magnet.

I never think they have the best pictures on in the summer, but it has been quite a good month at the local cinemas. Norma Shearer and Clark Gable in "Strange Interlude" was quite exciting, about an unfaithful wife, as they call 'em. Jack Payne and his band in "Say It With Music" is a British musical.

I liked Eddie Cantor in a musical called "Whoopee", in Technicolor. All about a very nervous young man who gets into all sorts of trouble. Also in this programme was a Mickey Mouse colour cartoon "The Whoopee Party". Spencer Tracy was good in "The Face in the Sky", and a truly lovely, but sad film was "The Secret of Madame Blanche" starring Irene Dunne and John Boles.

Ben Lyon and Glenda Farrell were in "Girl Missing", and Tala Birrell and Melvyn Douglas in "Nagana". Richards Tauber was in "The Right to Happiness". Tauber is, I think, an Austrian with a wonderful tenor voice. He has been well-known in German films, but now, as he doesn't like the way things are going with Hitler and his lot in Germany, Tauber has come to live in Britain and will make films over here.

In the Schoolboys' Own Library this month the Greyfriars tale is "The Schemer of the Remove", which is more about da Costa who has been sent to Greyfriars to ruin Harry Wharton. The other S.O.L. is "The Rookwood Secret Society".

NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S 'DANNY'S DIARY'

S.O.L. No. 197, "The Schemer of the Remove" was the middle portion (three Magnet stories) of the Da Costa series of the summer of 1928. S.O.L. No. 198, "The Rookwood Secret Society", when given in a list of S.O.L.'s in the C.D. Annual of 25 years ago, was correctly detected, by the compilers of the list, as a substitute story. Incorrectly, however, it was given as coming from a Boys' Friend series of the early twenties. Actually it was a Rookwood serial "The Dictator of Rookwood", a substitute serial which ran in the Gem in 1927. The sub writer introduced the old Hamilton card-sharp, Captain Punter, who had dropped out of the scene years earlier in genuine tales. The plot of the story was first used, and much more successfully, in the Magnet's "Judge Jeffreys" series of 1917. It was used again in a short Rookwood series by the real Owen Conquest about 1920. But S.O.L. 198 was the Gem serial of 1927, written by a sub who pinched the plot and used it with less warmth and success.

In the 1933 Gem "The Robot of St. Jim's" had been "The St. Jim's Inventor" in 1909. (In 1909 this had been followed by a sub tale which was omitted in 1933.) "The Treasure of Rylcombe Woods" and "Billy Binks' Burglar" had been entitled, respectively, "Tom Merry's Trust" and "The School House Secret" in 1909. "Barred By His Chums" had been entitled "Sacked" in 1909. It was the first story of what had been quite a famous pair in earlier days, and, under the title "Sacked", they had formed an excellent S.O.L., No. 26 in the year 1926. The story had Gore in the leading part - he was the one who was "Sacked". Gore had been very prominent in the early years of the blue Gem, but, for some reason, not clear to the naked eye, he, like Lumley-Lumley, dropped into obscurity though he remained on the St. Jim's scene presumably.

The Trocadero, Elephant and Castle, was renowned for its long and lavish shows in the early and mid-thirties. These were possible owing to the vast capacity of the wonderful cinema - 3,500 seats. There was a large resident orchestra, a world-famous organist at the huge Wurlitzer organ, and the stage shows, in addition to the films, were fabulous. Other exhibitors, who could not possibly compete, complained bitterly. As a result of this, a clause was inserted in the booking contract for every film, that "the total length of the programme of which this film forms part shall not exceed 3¼ hours". Though my experience was that the clause was not strictly observed, it curbed the Troc. But, in its heyday, the wonderful Trocadero was unique.

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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

I hope you are all enjoying the Eric Parker story so kindly sent to me by Bill Lofts. There are a couple more instalments to come. I should be pleased to receive more material for future months, perhaps someone could write about their favourite characters. There are plenty of Union Jacks and Sexton Blake Libraries for borrowing at 1p and 2p a time for each copy.

## THE ERIC PARKER STORY

by W. O. G. Lofts

In appearance Eric Parker was stockily built on the lines of E. S. Brooks with a pleasant type of face, looking much younger than his actual years. Always neatly dressed either in a grey tweed suit or sports jacket with tie, he had neat grey hair with small mustache. Another characteristic I noted was that he favoured blue shirts, whilst on special events a flower in his button-hole. I can well remember him wearing a white carnation at the Sexton Blake farewell party. Basically I had the impression that he was by nature a shy man, rather guarded in answering questions with a far-away look in his eyes until he got to know you. All in all I would describe him as a genial type of person, a good companion, and with a good sense of humour.

Eric Robert Parker to give him his full name was born at Stoke Newington, North London, on the 7th September, 1898. According to his own recollections, there was no other artist in the family. His Father was a clock-maker, as well as his Father before him. As a boy he attended an L.C.C. school, when at the age of fifteen, he had the great honour of being the very first London County Council schoolboy to be awarded an Art Scholarship with a maintenance grant, then attending the Central School of Art. Indeed, in The Boys' Own Paper cir. 1913 there was a small photograph of him, giving praise for his rare achievement. I can well remember loaning Leonard Matthews the Director of Juvenile Publications at Fleetway House this volume - he proudly showed it to editors who were using his work. His first published work was believed to be a set of pictures for postcards in 1915, then the First World War called him, and he served in The Bucks Hussars.

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After the war, he contributed to The Strand Magazine, and similar type of publications, but nothing was really permanent, until one day in 1921 he submitted samples of his work to the Amalgamated Press Ltd., when here was to begin an association that was to last for over fifty years, and right up to his death. Harold William Twyman had just taken over the editorship of The Union Jack from Walter Shute - better known as 'Walter Edwards' the well-known boys' writer. They say that 'a new broom sweeps clean', when up to that date quite a number of artists had been used to portray Sexton Blake. H. M. Lewis: Arthur Jones: J. H. Valda: Harry Lane: Val: E. Briscoe: C. H. Blake: and W. Taylor. 'Twy', as he was called, wanted someone more regular - someone whose drawings that readers could easily identify as the Baker Street sleuth. He recognised at once that he had a real find in Eric Parker, so persevering with him in time he was drawing the characters almost every week, other artists just appearing from time to time. Eric told me that he had actually based his Sexton Blake on a commercial traveller he once knew at a club. He used to sit alone, a tall distinguished figure, making a big impression on his mind. He was also lean, smoked a pipe, and had slightly receding hair.

Parker's work became so popular with readers, that in 1930, Len Pratt who was editing The Sexton Blake Library, also made use of his services when he drew four covers each month right up to 1940, when the paper shortages cut this quota down to two. Even when the old Union Jack ceased in 1933 being renamed Detective Weekly he continued drawing the covers, as well as the inside illustrations.

Eric Parker's work to the professional fellow artist was always considered brilliant. It had the impact similar to watching a film, his fine draughtsmanship being matched by very clever characterisation. He had the gift of drawing the layout exactly right, perfect in background detail without cluttering it up with unnecessary objects. One could conjure up in the mind what type of house it was by just looking at the door, or by say a dingy looking street, the whole area where the action was taking place. Atmosphere could also be said to be the secret of his power, as well as the clothing of his characters being exactly right, right for the character, circumstances, season and period. If there were a car in the sketch, you can bet it was the latest model if the scene was of

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current times - he was actually a keen motorist with a taste for racy models. Was there a girl in the sketch? Well if she was young looking - and Eric could draw very shapely young girls - you can bet she had on the latest dress of fashion. Once he had to draw a Chinese villain, when any other artist would have probably drawn him (especially in the twenties) in Mandarin dress - somehow like Wun Lung in the early days at Greyfriars. Eric bang up-to-date had his Chinese in evening dress that would have graced the Ritz Hotel, which as it happened tallied with the description in the story. Another classic example of his skill, could be taken not by Sexton Blake, but by his portrayal of Detective Inspector Coutts who appeared in so many of the stories. Coutts looked aggressive, cocksure, burly and exactly as the writers had described him. In other fields of drawing, his historical scenes were authentic, even down to the design on the tunic buttons on his Napoleonic uniforms. To sum up his work in general, he made brilliant use of shadows to give a dramatic and mysterious effect, plus the right colour sense. His style could be said to be unique, and I could never remember him telling me that he based his work on another, nor been influenced by someone in the past. Nor could any other artist be found whose work resembled anything like his own.

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# Nelson Lee Column

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by An Old Boy

School life would be deadly dull were it not for the friendly House rivalry that blossoms from time to time. And sometimes the japes are perpetrated by neighbouring schools like the River House and Helmford College, etc.

One such jape stands out brightly from the rest and I remember it as though it were only yesterday.

Although all schools are prepared for April First foolery and boast they are ready for any unexpected event that is destined to fool the school, yet there was a time when the entire Lower School at St. Frank's was bamboozled into behaving in an extraordinary way including a master.

April the First that year had fallen on a Saturday and wireless was still in its infancy but very popular. The Common Rooms each contained a loud speaker to a wireless set and Mr. Pyecraft of the East House was usually to be found, when time permitted, listening to whatever programme that was being broadcast.

Thus it was that on that fateful morning when an important football match was being fought out on Little Side between St. Frank's and the visiting Helmford College, that Mr. Pyecraft was startled to hear a Special Announcement over the wireless.

It stated that a swarm of bees had joined forces from hives north of Helmford and were coming in the direction of Bellton and St. Frank's College. Another and official-sounding voice broke in to warn everybody who were out in the open to lie flat on their faces as this was the best way for the bees to fly overhead.

With his gown billowing Pyecraft rushed from Masters' Common Room out into the Triangle and across to Little Side. The game was in progress and at a very decisive moment when the East House master reached the field.

Biggleswade of the Sixth, was referee and immediately blew on his whistle as he watched the agitated master approach the players.

With such an important fixture in their minds it is doubtful if the date was remembered at all as Mr. Pyecraft issued the warning he had

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heard come over the air. As the announcer had made it quite clear that only those who happened to be out in the open were to lie flat Pyecraft had all the players, the referee and himself all lying flat in the damp earth, as they waited for the oncoming swarm.

And they waited and waited.

When after a time had elapsed and no bees were forthcoming it was suggested they had veered off in another direction. And the players rose with dirty, mud-stained faces and looked at each other.

But they dropped to the ground instantly as a drone came over the air from the direction of the Head's garden. And still they waited.

The arrival of Willy Handforth to the field brought the news that the drone was the gardener cutting the lawn. So the players rose again with even more dirtier faces.

And still Mr. Pyecraft was convinced the bees were coming. But light was at hand. Willy Handforth reminded everybody it was April the First and later on it was found that Helmford Broadcasting Station had admitted putting the joke over the air to retain the April the First tradition.

But St. Frank's, Helmford College and the local inhabitants were all fooled and it is to be regretted that I have no record of the sight in the local High Streets where people were to be seen stretched out on the ground to escape the swarms of bees.

In those early days it is to be feared that Broadcasting radio stations were allowed a certain amount of liberty and many were the tricks these stations played on the unsuspecting public whenever the opportunity occurred.

One strange fact emerged later was that the Moor View School for Young Ladies which was very near St. Frank's has also heard the warning but all ignored it. No school mistress had run out to warn the girls playing Hockey in the school grounds as did Mr. Pyecraft.

But that is not to say the girls couldn't be victims of an April the First jape. I feel sure they were at some period, but this escapes me at present.

Schoolgirls are not invulnerable, you know.

THE DOCTORS

by C. H. Churchill

In the St. Frank's Saga as related in the Nelson Lee Library over

the years we were enthralled by a galaxy of characters created by Edwy Searles Brooks. The vast majority were members of the St. Frank's establishment, namely scholars and staff. Many non St. Frank's were featured also, fairly frequently while others only had a brief life and were forgotten very quickly. Dorrie and Umlosi were two of the regulars and I dealt with them in a previous article in the C.D. a month or so ago.

I would now like to bring forth Dr. James Brett, the Bellton village medico. I suspect that very few Leeites today would recollect or know that he was not the first Doctor to be mentioned in the St. Frank's stories. When these commenced in No. 112 St. Frank's did not from then on appear each week as no doubt is well known. In the third St. Frank's story in No. 116, "Fullwood's Victory", on page 10, Tommy Watson is reported as saying "Dr. Banham has been sent for". Obviously, therefore, whenever a doctor was needed at the school Dr. Banham was the one to be sent for.

The first time Dr. Brett was mentioned was in No. 142, 23rd Feb., 1918, "A Mystery of the Night or the Doctor's Ordeal". In this story a man was found dead in a ditch having had a fatal blow on the head. When the police in the person of Inspector Jameson made enquiries, it was discovered that he had had a dispute the evening before with the Doctor. Inspector Jameson decided to detain Dr. Brett on suspicion. Nelson Lee, however, was a close friend of Brett and took steps to prove his innocence. He succeeded in solving the affair by proving that the man was killed by a spanner falling from an aircraft passing overhead at the time. To us in 1983 this seems most unlikely to say the least, but remember! the story was written in 1918 in the very early days of flying and would not have seemed so strange to anyone reading it in those days.

In the years to come Dr. Brett frequently appeared in the St. Frank's stories, but he did not star again as he did in No. 142. He did often play secondary roles as in the "Death of Church" series when he gave Lee valuable aid in protecting Church from his enemy. He also accompanied the holiday parties most years when they visited such places as El Dorado and the White Giants, etc.

I do not remember a particular description of Dr. Brett, but in No. 142 it does say -

And while we were standing in a group, silent and thoughtful,

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a pair of French windows on the side of the doctor's house opened. Dr. Brett emerged, a cigarette between his lips. He waved his hand cheerily, and passed down the short garden path to a rustic gate nearby. He was a youngish man, and a good sort all round.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 184 - Magnets 1007-9 - Captain Spencer Series

The vital force of the Magnet at its best lay in the continuity in its presentation of character, together with a sense of development of personality. Although every series would be complete in itself; each one would have links with the past and significance for the future. Nowhere was this more apparent than in those stories dealing with the Bounder of Greyfriars, Herbert Vernon-Smith.

In the Dallas series which has ended a few weeks earlier, Vernon-Smith had succeeded in quarrelling with many, including Redwing whom he had taunted with holding a scholarship specially founded for him by his father. Redwing had left Greyfriars, to reappear in the South Seas series some weeks later. The Captain Spencer series forms a bridge between the Dallas and South Seas series, and it shows Vernon-Smith at his best and worst, with no real friends, and making do with Skinner as a study companion.

The series dealt with an armed bank robber whom Vernon-Smith chanced to see divesting himself of his disguise and hiding the loot in a hollow oak in Lantham Chase. The cash he took back to Greyfriars, and this enabled him to escape punishment for cutting detention, but no-one at all was prepared to believe that the bank robber was Captain Spencer, an old boy of the school and the headmaster's guest, and eventually Vernon-Smith was locked in the punishment room for spreading the story around the school.

The twists and turns of the plot were absorbing, but it was a series of a ruthless nature, and it was perhaps inevitable that no-one emerged very creditably at the end. Certainly, Vernon-Smith's victories over Mr. Quelch are fascinating reading, especially the



opening episode about the playing card box that turned out to have Latin notes inside, but equally Mr. Quelch's understandable intense irritation showed him to be absolutely severe, implacable, and quite unsympathetic.

One intriguing aspect of these vintage Magnets is the manner in which Charles Hamilton found time to offer philosophical comments to the reader. He analysed Vernon-Smith's character thus:

"Like most domineering natures, he could not tolerate domination. A rebel is generally a would-be tyrant, just as a tyrant is one who, in other circumstances, would be a rebel. The romantic rebel who seeks only to establish the reign of freedom and equality is an entertaining figure in fiction, but has very seldom existed outside fiction."

A compelling story and acute psychological comment - and all for two-pence a week!

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THE FINGER OF SUSPICION

by Ernest Holman

I always find any article in C.D. concerning substitute stories of more than ordinary interest - but it can also be very frustrating. Interesting to learn of the investigation, knowledge, belief, evidence, etc., that is revealed by a writer - frustrating, though, when the believers differ. One has to try and balance views against views before forming one's own opinion; even then, a question mark often remains.

I am far more inclined to give consideration to the opinions of writers who are prepared to make the statement "It is my belief . . ." Unfortunately, there are times when readers are asked by a writer to accept as a fact that "what I say must be correct".

Investigator Bill Lofts has been able to study all the old AF records - but even he does suggest that a particular story credited to 'so-and-so' may be open, in his opinion, to doubt. Roger Jenkins has included the Greyfriars Film Stars series (reckoned by some Magnetites to be by Samways) in his Hamilton Library but points out that doubt exists regarding the authenticity.

Mr. Laurie Sutton has obviously carried out great study on the question of 'sub' stories, as revealed from time to time in C.D. Most of his revelations have proved to be very well-founded. That is why I think



it is a pity that his article in March C.D. should state definitely that 'Bunter the Cavalier' is a 'sub'. He may be right - but I wish he had given it less as a fact but rather as his opinion. He goes on to imply that 'Playing the Goat' and 'Buck Up Bunter' also must be 'subs'. He does, in all fairness, only use the word 'suspicion' with regard to three other stories.

My own suspicions are aroused, however, when his article asks us to believe that SIX singles (873, 893, 896, 897, 899, 900) are each a substitute story. True, Austin and Down did approach very near to Hamilton; in fact, when I read, several years ago, the stories in 'Best of Magnet and Gem', I had no thought then that the second Magnet story was not by Hamilton. Not now possessing the publication, I cannot recall the title - it concerned Bolsover and Minor and the apparent burning of Quelch's manuscript. It did turn out that Austin had written this story - which was very much in the Hamilton style.

Whilst evidence must always be studied carefully, I would want more than a few 'quotes' from a story before believing that it revealed substitution throughout. The Editorial office was not above adding 'bits' to Hamilton. (Pentelow, for instance, would add the name of his character, Delarey, to any other names mentioned in a Hamilton story.) Let us consider a couple of Magnets.

'Billy Bunter's Bargain' (1221) had one of the longest Chapters (2nd) to be found in a Magnet. In my opinion, Hamilton's Chapter ended one paragraph short of Column 2, Page 6. The rest of the Chapter (which had no relevance to the story whatsoever) was added editorially - purely for the purpose of providing an incident for the cover illustration. I think there was also a small insertion in Chapter 4, towards the end of Column 1, Page 8. Turn to Pages 9 and 13 and note that the illustrations thereon were reduced in size - the second to a considerable extent. This was to compensate for the space taken by the addition to Chapter 2.

In the Smedley series, again we find (still in my opinion) that the cover illustration to 1369 caused an addition to be made to Chapter 11. Here, once more, is to be found an unusually lengthy Chapter. I believe the addition was made from the start of the last paragraph in the third Column of Page 19. I would also offer the opinion that Hamilton's original ending to this Chapter - and his start to Chapter 12 - was

'adapted' editorially. (This time there was no reducing of illustrations, but the end Serial was rather short that week.)

No-one (I think) doubts that both these Magnets were genuine Hamilton. Yet they were 'doctored' - and such happenings did occur, even on minor scales, in the true stories. C. H. Chapman was once quoted as saying that it was by no means unknown for him to be asked to provide illustrations on which incidents could be 'hung'.

It would be interesting to hear the views of others on the six Magnets mentioned by Mr. Sutton. I am quite willing to be 'blown offside'. All the same; six recognised Magnets - all suspect? H'm!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: The Magnet story "Playing the Goat" was discussed in a "Let's Be Controversial" article some years ago. It seems worth while to repeat it here, so here goes.)

### LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

#### No. 240. AN HOUR TO PLAY AND THE LAST MAN IN (Repeat)

Over fifty years ago there appeared in the Magnet an excellent school and cricket story which provides food for thought all these years later. It had the rather inelegant title of "Playing the Goat", and it starred Vernon-Smith.

One puzzling aspect of the story is why it was not extended into a series. There were all the ingredients for a good dramatic series. Yet today it seems to us to be an example of plot wastage such as is a striking factor of, in particular, many of the most outstanding tales of the blue Gem. Twelve years earlier, "Playing the Goat" would have been typical of the best single stories of the period. Twelve years later it would have been extended into a long series with its plot stretched wafer-thin to cover, probably, too great a number of stories.

Some of the plot was familiar, but it contained much that was original. To start with, the reader's memory is carried back pleasantly to the startling and unforgettable rebel series of a few months earlier. The Bounder suddenly decides to believe that Harry Wharton's reformation is only make-believe. The Bounder is going for a merry time at "The Feathers" up the river, and he asks Wharton to accompany him. Here, in passing, we get the only slightly sub-standard writing in a generally beautifully-written tale. "You don't seem to realise that

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you have insulted me," says Wharton, with a pompous smugness which would have provided lovely fuel for the Tom Merry denigrators had the hero of the Shell made such a comment.

And when the Bounder issues the same invitation to Redwing, the sailorman's son turns crimson, and some of the standers-by look disgusted.

The Bounder is dropped from the cricket eleven, and "signs on" as it were with the Upper Fourth and with Temple as his captain. Clearly it could have made a great little series, but the main potentials of the plot were never exploited.

At once, Temple is shown as an utter fool. He refuses to play Wilkinson, who is a good cricketer, because he does not like Wilkinson. He doesn't use Vernon-Smith at all as a bowler. Then he sends in the Bounder ninth-wicket down, and, though the Bounder is capable of making a century, at that stage of the game there is nobody to keep the other end open. As a result of this one game, the Bounder's eyes are opened, and he returns to the Remove cricket fold.

If Temple (and, dare we add it, the author) not been so incredibly stupid, we could have had a marvellous series. It is surely very unlikely that Temple would have jumped at the chance of acquiring the star batsman and bowler of the Remove and then refused to use him in any capacity. What was wanted here was for the Bounder to succeed for a time in his treacherous purpose, and for Temple's initial delight at the success of his recruit to gradually become soured by jealousy.

So it would be silly to pretend that "Playing the Goat" could not have been greatly improved by skilful extension, while at the same time we recognise it as a delightful tale and outstanding as it was.

A few comments from Temple highlight one aspect of Frank Richards's Greyfriars.

Says Temple to Harry Wharton: "You call yourself captain of the Remove; you've had the cheek to form a separate cricket club in the Lower Fourth. You fix up matches with outside schools, just as if you were a school eleven, and not a dashed Form eleven. Wingate, as head of the games, oughtn't to allow it, but he does."

So Frank Richards put into the mouth of Temple the very argument which would be used by anyone trying to prove that the games

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arrangements at his Greyfriars were a little absurd.

We had the First Eleven, skippered by Wingate. So far so good. But there is no mention of a Second Eleven and a Third Eleven, as there certainly would have been at a school like Greyfriars. Instead, the only other Eleven, playing outside fixtures, was the Remove Eleven which played all the junior games with other schools.

In real life, Wharton would probably have skippered the Third Eleven, and that would have comprised players from two or three junior forms when other schools were encountered.

Certainly, more believable was the arrangement at St. Jim's where Tom Merry's team comprised juniors of the Shell and Fourth and of both Houses.

Drawing up and arranging the fixture lists would not have been Wharton's responsibility. That would have been the pre-season work for the Games Master. And the skipper would almost certainly have selected his team under the guidance of the Games Master.

Most of us would not have had Greyfriars any different from what it was. But Temple's comment in this delightful single story should not be overlooked, for it provides material for discussion.

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## The Postman Called

(Interesting items from the Editor's letter-bag)

H. W. SHARPE (Victoria: Australia): You would be aware of the tragic bushfires here in February. It is of interest that the Victorian Cabinet Minister controlling the fire-fighting and the immense public collections (which reached approx. 24 million dollars) - a man named Race Mathews - was, and still is, an avid Nelson Lee fan. When he was a schoolboy in his late teens I used to meet him in the city (Melbourne) and have sessions discussing the Lee. I don't see him nowadays but I see his brother Bill, a bookseller (secondhand books) and he assures me that Race is still a keen Nelson Lee man.

Mrs. M. H. WOODS (Scarborough): There is an old belief that one should never try to turn back the pages of one's life; you, and all who join in the Hobby, are proving every day how happily old saws can be

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disproved. Please don't ever dare give up C.D.

Mrs. M. CADOGAN (Beckenham): Another lovely issue of C.D. How good it is to see the fine Nelson Lee Library cover (which would have warmed dear Bob Blythe's heart), and the delightful picture of my ever-favourites, the Hippo Girls! What wonderful exuberance Foxwell managed to get into those pictures! I have a copy of the annual from which that particular cover picture is taken, and I like it so much that I keep it propped up on my desk, rather than put away on a bookshelf, so that the picture cheers me every time I sit down to write.

I read with great interest Esmond Kadish's article ALSO RAN, especially enjoying his comments on Mabel Lynn, who was always described as 'Barbara Redfern's golden-haired lieutenant'. As he mentioned, the best chum of the leader in so many of the old stories was inclined to be unobtrusive. An exception occurs at Morcove School, of course. Betty Barton's dearest friend was Polly Linton, always described as 'the Madcap', and always the initiator of larks and high-jinks. Horace Phillips managed with Betty and Polly to create a pair of chums of equal strength and charisma, though with very different personalities.

R. F. ACRAMAN (Ruislip): Am pleased to find that 'Danny's Diary' has now reached 1933 which is about the time I first took an interest in the Magnet & Gem. I look forward to his further reports. Ernest Holman's article about P. G. Wodehouse (I must have nearly all P.G.W.'s books) was of his school stories rather than of his later period and I consider it rather unusual that two well-known school story writers of the period such as our 'Frank' and P.G.W. never actually seemed aware of each other and yet clearly they must have known of each other. However, was fascinated the other day when reading P. G. Wodehouse's 'Over Seventy'; he writes - I quote his references to American T.V. ... Tuesday, 9.15 ...

"Alonzo Todds 'Park your brains in the Cloakroom' ..." which clearly refers to a show. (Penguin page 613.)

Can this be our Alonzo Todd? Did Alonzo go into the American show business? and surely if P.G.W. had ever read the Magnet or Gem he could hardly have let such an obvious name slip out without some



comment on the Magnet?

STAN KNIGHT (Cheltenham): Many thanks for another interest-packed edition of our beloved magazine.

The editorials are one of the highlights eagerly perused, set the seal, and whet the appetite for the goodies which follow.

I found the letter from Mr. Holland very interesting, especially his reference to a series of hardbacks Teddy Lester's Schooldays, as I have the set of six published by Latimer Press which I prize very highly.

The Teddy Lester books were written, of course, by John Finnemore, an outstanding boys' writer of the early years of the century. His story of the early days of scouting, "The Wolf Patrol" is my favourite story, I read it several times as a boy, and one of the biggest thrills of my collecting days was when a copy was sent to me out of the blue as it were, by the late Frank Vernon Lay.

T. HOPKINSON (Dukinfield): Mr. Hewson's letter made me smile when I read that he thought everything after the Stacey series seems stale and flat to him. The Bertie Vernon series is superb in my opinion.

Fr. F. HERTZBERG (Wirral): Concerning Mr. Holman's article last month, 13 "Bosambo of the River" stories by Edgar Wallace appeared in Chums during 1928 and 1929. They were illustrated attractively in King Solomon's Mines style by Tom Hall.

ALAN STEWART (Burnham-on-Crouch): In 'The Postman Called' Joe Williamson (like most of us) 'Never dreamed that the stories of Greyfriars and St. Jim's were written by the same man', I used to get annoyed when Martin Clifford introduced Greyfriars characters into the St. Jim's stories (football matches, etc.) and vice versa, why can't they stick to their own schools I thought, the characters of which they understand! What a crass duffer I was!

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): A super "Digest" this month - not that they aren't always "super"! That bus on the cover brought on waves of nostalgia for the special "excursion" the family used to make on the old open-topped buses to High Beech in Epping Forest, in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties. It might rain, of course, but who cared? There was

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a little tarpaulin you could cover your knees with, if it did rain. Going to High Beech was a rare treat - wouldn't suit today's sophisticated youngsters, though!

Regarding the Great Monocle Mystery - as referred to by M. S. Fellows - the explanation is really quite simple. The dozen or so boys, referred to by P. G. Wodehouse as wearing monocles in public schools before World War I, were really one and the same person - the one and only Gussy who had once again, absented himself from St. Jim's, after a slight "disagreement" with Dr. Holmes, and was visiting each school in turn, complete with famous eye-glass!

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# News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

## MIDLAND

We just reached double figures when we met on a rather showery evening, 10 members being present.

As usual, Tom Porter had his Anniversary Number on display, this month's attraction being Nelson Lee Library (old series) No. 203, dated 26th April, 1919.

Refreshments were provided by Joan Loveday and myself. We chatted during refreshments. Vince Loveday had seen a shop of silver and goldsmiths - proprietor: Mark Linley, and Keith Normington mentioned the Bunter Club he had seen.

Roger Jenkins of the London Club had sent Tom Porter a game called Puzzle Grid. Single letters in the form of a grid. The idea was to make up words referring to Old Boys' Book topics. There were no winners. All players got 19 out of 32 possible solutions.

A reading from Lawrence Sutton's "Greyfriars for Grown-Ups" on "The Inky-Fingered Brigade" proved quite amusing.

A discussion took place on the what is now considered an out-of-date method of teaching at Greyfriars, and whether it ought to be brought up-to-date. The general opinion was that modern methods are so bad that those at Greyfriars could not possibly be any worse ... Geoff Lardner said for him the Greyfriars curriculum had a charm all of its

own. Geoff ought to know. He is the Principal of Rowley Regis 6th Form College (not Sandwell as I stated on a previous occasion).

We were so busy that we went on right up till 9.30. Our next meeting is the A.G.M. There will be further meetings on 28th June and 26th July.

### LONDON

The new rendezvous at Loughton proved to be an ideal one. A very good attendance enjoyed a happy time with a varied programme, and, for those who so desired, a look at the host's, Chris Harper's, interesting study.

Winifred Morss read the Memory Lane feature which dealt with the A.G.M. meeting at East Dulwich in 1966.

The Founders' Bell was on exhibition suitably inscribed and was agreed on all sides a very good job of work by the engraver. Larry Peters was thanked for his efforts and appointed as the custodian. A book is to be obtained so that all the names of those who have been members of the club and have performed duties and tasks to further the hobby of old boys' book collecting can be inscribed. The secretary to compile a list of members' names since the inception of the club.

Chris Harper's Musical quiz was won by Roy Parsons; he had part one correct whilst Roger Jenkins was the winner of part two. Prizes were awarded to the winners.

Tom Wright read a St. Sam's story, "Steeple Jack Jolly" which provoked laughter.

Ann Clarke won the Character Initial quiz that Roy Parsons compiled and it appeared afterwards that Arthur Bruning and Roger Jenkins were also winners. In fact a triple dead heat for first place.

A reading by Bill Bradford about the old papers that were published and that did not have very long runs. Bill had brought along specimens of nearly all papers mentioned in the talk. A lively discussion took place.

Next meeting at Greyfriars, Hollybush Ride, Wokingham, Berks., on Sunday, 12th June. Kindly inform if intending to be present, bring own tuck. No Hamiltonian library transactions will be conducted.

Votes of thanks to Chris and Suzanne Harper, ably assisted by

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Duncan and Laura, were accorded at the conclusion of a very happy gathering.

BEN WHITER

### CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Roy Whiskin on Sunday, 8 May. Members present signed a "get well" card for Tony Cowley, who was recovering from an operation in hospital.

Bill Thurbon talked about the crossbow, in a "follow up" talk to his recent one on archery. He said that the crossbow, as distinct from the long bow, which could be found in prehistoric cave painting, was probably a Chinese invention, dating back, possibly, to the third century B.C. It did not appear to have been used much, if at all, in classical times, although the Romans certainly had giant crossbow types of weapons, which they used as a form of field artillery. The Medieval crossbow is first mentioned in the 10th century A.D. Bill quoted from various stories by Ronald Welch, Sabatini, Conan Doyle, Stevenson, Charles Reade, and Barringer. He also mentioned that the "Boys Journal" in the early years of this century had claimed to be publishing a "new story" by Robert Louis Stevenson, which proved to be "The Black Arrow" under a different title and that a scene from Reade's "Cloister and the Hearth" had been plagiarised in No. 2 of the Aldine Robin Hood Library! He mentioned modern crossbow shooting, and also the use of crossbows by modern deer poaching gangs.

After enjoying Mrs. Whiskin's magnificent tea, the meeting resumed. Mike Rouse followed with a superb show of slides of postcards of Seaside entertainers; covering the seaside from Margate along the South coast via the Welsh coast up to the West Coast. This intensely interesting show covered some sixty cards, ranging in time from the early years of the Century until the outbreak of the War. He discussed the hard life some of these showpeople had, and the intense competition which took place between them. Mike was warmly thanked for this most interesting item.

The meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to Roy and Mrs. Whiskin for their hospitality.



NORTHERN

At our meeting on 14th May, a warm welcome was given to Graham McDermott making another visit to us from Epsom, and to our special guest, Mr. Bill Lofts.

Bill gave his "Greyfriars Model" talk and display. The model of Greyfriars had been built from photocopies of plans that had appeared in "Chuckles". One of his nephews, a professional architect, had built the model, and Bill had got Basil Reynolds to colour it. It was most effective, and Northern Club members can claim a first in seeing this model in its full glory.

For his second talk Bill discussed the D. C. Thomson papers, and - a first again for Northern Club - showed the picture of D. C. Thomson Bill had obtained. Bill seemed to have more nostalgic memories of the Thomson papers and comics rather than of the Magnet and Gem. It was pointed out that the Thomson papers did not carry the authors' and artists' names. Bill astounded us by saying that the "Dandy" and the "Beano" in the mid-50's were selling 2.2 million copies a week, compared with some of the A.P. papers averaging 250,000 copies a week.

Keith Smith commented that certain characters in the comics now "got away with murder" with little reprimand, compared with the punishments meted out in the early copies. D. C. Thomson died in the 50's, aged 94, but many of the papers live on.

Bill was given a warm vote of thanks for his travels to the Northern Club, and it was stressed that we hoped to see him again very soon.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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HAROLD TRUSCOTT writes: I notice that my old friends of the Northern Club are still meeting at the Swarthmore Educational Centre in Leeds. What is a bit puzzling is the statement "It was pointed out, incidentally, by one of our members that one of Hamilton's schools was Swarthmore College - a different spelling, but the same pronunciation". But, since the spelling, as it stands in the C.D., is the same, perhaps it is the pronunciation that should be different. Or is it a slip of the typewriter?

## Large Exhibition of Old Boys' Books and Comics

An exhibition called Penny Dreadfuls and Comics, (sub-titled) English Children's Periodicals from Victorian Times to the Present Day - will be held at Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood (80 yards from the Tube Station). This will be from 2nd June to 2nd October, the full summer season. Admission is free. Opening times: Monday to Thursday and Saturday, 10 a. m. to 6 p. m. (closed Friday and Sunday).

There will be a catalogue, and if this is anything like the German issue I have seen, will be the best ever produced. The exhibition is arranged through Kevin Carpenter of Oldenburg University, West Germany; periodicals ranging from early Penny Bloods such as Sweeney Todd, right through to our own favourites such as Magnet, Gem, Hotspur, Eagle, and present day comics. Girls papers are not neglected, nor is Rupert. The catalogue contains a full reference to the various biographies published by many of the Collectors' Digest faithfuls such as Eric Fayne, Roger Jenkins, Mary Cadogan, John Wernham, apart from myself and Derek Adley. Visitors to London this Summer may find this an interesting place to visit.

W. O. G. LOFTS

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### ECHO OF THE PAST

by F. R. Lowe

Whilst delving through some early numbers of the Collectors' Digest some weeks ago I re-discovered (at first without much heed) a rather startling, but interesting item, submitted by Mr. George Bromley, of Wigston Magna, Leicestershire, in C.D. No. 73, Jan. 1953.

Two chapters, one of St. Jim's, and one of Greyfriars were in this issue.

The St. Jim's Chapter 4, Gem 1, 336 'Tom Merry and Co. go Gay', dated 23rd Sept., 1933 - reprint from 'Tom Merry's Carnival', No. 111, 26th March, 1910.

The other chapter, Chapter 8, was from Magnet No. 601, the story entitled 'The Greyfriars Tourists' dated 16th Aug., 1919.

Those two chapters in 'Gem' and 'Magnet' are years apart, almost identical with each other, except for characters names and locale. According to the C.D. record and Herbert Leckenby, the then C.D. editor, the Gem story was written by Charles Hamilton. The Magnet story was later catalogued as a substitute story, written by C. M. Down, the popular editor of the Magnet in the 1920's and 1930's. It would appear in writing this - 'The Greyfriars Tourists', he 'lifted' a whole chapter from Hamilton's work, just by a little re-arranging.

It seemed easy to snatch a whole chapter in the old days without being noticed for years. It is not surprising that substitute yarns were not spotted over long periods.

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REVIEW OF BOOK AND STAGE

by Mary Cadogan

THE COMIC ART OF ROY WILSON

Alan Clark & David Ashford  
(Midas Books: £9, 95)



Like the colourful old children's annuals that this big and bumper book so much resembles, THE COMIC ART OF ROY WILSON has about it a truly golden glow, and it will delight many connoisseurs and collectors. Although it deals with the work of only one artist, so great is Roy Wilson's range that the book includes pictures from lots of our favourite comics - FUNNY WONDER, SPARKLER, TIP TOP, RADIO FUN, JINGLES, HAPPY DAYS and FILM FUN, among others. The authors have done a magnificent job in assembling such a fine collection of art work. Their text too is interesting and informative, though I wouldn't completely agree with their uncompromising claim that Wilson 'stands out above all others as undoubtedly the finest' comic artist Britain has produced. (I'm still flying the Foxwell flag!) This book beautifully conveys Wilson's wonderful zest and inventiveness, and his 'bouncing, mirthful figures', not the least of whom are animal characters. It is sheer joy to browse through its pages and to meet again much-loved heroes like Steve and Stumpy, the World's Worst Cowboys; Pitch and Toss, those Saucy Salts and

Merry Mariners from the good ship Saucy Sal; Stymie and his Magic Wishbone, Happy Andy and His Playful Pets, The Tiddley Wink Family and good old comic Queen Bess. There is also an interesting selection from Roy Wilson's show-biz strips featuring stars like Tommy Handley (and Funf), Jimmy Edwards, Harry Secombe, Terry Thomas and Morecambe & Wise.

(NOTE: The above book can be obtained at the specially reduced price of £8.50 which includes postage, in response to direct application, with remittance, to A. Clark, 24 Arundel Rd., Tunbridge Wells, Kent.)

Continued on Page 32

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WANTED: Howard Baker Club and Press Volumes; early Magnets, pre-war comics.

HARRY MARRIOTT, 27 GREENVIEW DRIVE  
NORTHAMPTON, Tel. (0604) 711874

THAT GREYFRIARS MODEL

by W. T. Thurbon

The more ancient members of the O.B.B.C., whose memories go back to the early years of the century will probably remember with much affection that wonderful comic "Chuckles", with its fine illustrations and excellent serials. Chuckles was in its early years quite a prolific distributor of gifts. Among these were a series of cut-out cardboard parts, which could be assembled to form a model of Greyfriars School.

At the April meeting of the Cambridge Club, Bill Lofts produced for the admiration of members one of the completed models. Maurice Hall expressed the opinion that the model fitted well with Frank Richards' description of the school.

Bill explained that he had fairly recently acquired the set of cut-outs, and after some preliminary experimentation, had sought the aid of his brother, a draughtsman, in assembling the model. After some considerable difficulty Bill's brother had been successful. He expressed the opinion that no school boy of the period of the original issue of Chuckles would have succeeded in assembling the model, since there were various small errors in the parts and it took the experience of the draughtsman to make the necessary adjustments to fit the model together.

I wonder if there is among our veterans anyone who either managed to assemble the model, or remembers it? I must confess that I found it beyond my skill. It would be nice to know of anyone who did make up the model at the time of publication.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: In an article in the C.D. Annual for 1967, the late Gerry Allison discussed this model, and, in fact, we reproduced a picture of the fourth and final plan. The entire model was given away in four parts, apparently. It featured in Chuckles in the year 1920.)

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WANTED: SEXTON BLAKE BUST (Reproduction of the 1922 original preferred.)

TERRY BEENHAM, 35 ESK WAY, RISE PARK  
ROMFORD, RM1 4YH. (Tel. Rom 66378)

\*\*\*\*\*  
SALE: Howard Baker vols. Books by V. Gunn, B. Grey, E. Wallace.  
MAGOVENY, 65 BENTHAM STREET, BELFAST 12



REVIEW FROM PAGE 30 continued

"Really, Belinda, I don't know what the school is coming to, taking in scholarship girls from elementary schools. Who is this Daisy girl and what does one know about her? She's bound to be absolutely frightful."



DAISY PULLS IT OFF

Globe Theatre

My husband and I were sent complimentary tickets for the First Night of **DAISY PULLS IT OFF** at London's Globe Theatre, and I went along with some apprehension. I knew that **this play**, previously presented at the Nuffield Theatre in Southampton, was a send-up of the **schoolgirl-story** genre of the 1920s and '30s. (My attention was first drawn to it by publicity leaflets and press announcements carrying Leonard Shields's Morcove illustrations from **THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN** and G. M. Dodshon's Cliff House pictures from **THE SCHOOL FRIEND**.) So often these days the traditions which many of us respect are mercilessly satirized by the media. It is, therefore, refreshing to find that **DAISY PULLS IT OFF** is not only witty and entertaining but full of charm and atmosphere. The cast enter fully into this affectionate spoof story about a scholarship girl making good at an elite boarding-school. (Shades of Betty Barton and Peggy Preston!) Although we are made to laugh at the simplistic wholeheartedness of girlish crushes and hockey mania, and the delights of dormitory high-jinks and midnight feasts, watching the play was a warm and happy experience. There are moments when one almost feels one is back at Cliff House ... or Morcove ... or whatever Alma Mater claims our undying loyalties!

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STILL WANTED: Sexton Blake Second Series No. 453, "On the Midnight Beat" and No. 572, "The Crime in the Kiosk". Both by John G. Brandon. Name your price.  
J. ASHLEY, 46 NICHOLAS CRESCENT, FAREHAM, HANTS., PO15 5AH.